

SMOKE ALARMS

In September of 2020, the City of Norfolk adopted the 2018 International Property Maintenance Code. Included in the code is the provision:

“Where more than one smoke alarm is required to be installed within an individual dwelling or sleeping unit, the smoke alarms shall be interconnected in such a manner that the activation of one alarm will activate all the alarms in the individual unit. Physical interconnection of smoke alarms shall not be required where listed wireless alarms are installed and all alarms sound upon activation of one alarm.”

Existing non-interconnected smoke alarms that are properly installed and maintained can remain in service in structures until such time as:

- *Change of tenants in a rental unit, or,*
- *Transfer of ownership in the sale of a property.*

Upon change of tenants or transfer of ownership, the installation of interconnected smoke alarms is required. The presence of approved interconnected smoke alarms shall be verified at subsequent change of tenant and/or ownership.

General Considerations –

Smoke alarms have a 10-year “life span”, so in many instances upgrade of the alarm system is appropriate.

Interconnected smoke alarms provide early warning of fires in remote areas of a dwelling, giving greater opportunity to escape the hazard.

Wireless interconnection of smoke alarms – relatively inexpensive / simple to install.

Smoke alarms shall be installed in the following locations:

1. In each sleeping room.
2. Outside each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms.
3. On each additional story of the dwelling, including basements and habitable attics and not including crawl spaces and uninhabitable attics. In dwellings or dwelling units with split levels and without an intervening door between the adjacent levels, a smoke alarm installed on the upper level shall suffice for the adjacent lower level provided that the lower level is less than one full story below the upper level.
4. Smoke alarms shall be installed not less than 3 feet (914 mm) horizontally from the door or opening of a bathroom that contains a bathtub or shower unless this would prevent placement of a smoke alarm required by this section.

Questions – Call the Health Official at 402-844-2046, or
Building Services at 402-844-2060